

DON'T BE A BYSTANDER

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP STOP BULLYING

Ever laughed at a post on facebook and commented ... or forwarded on a hurtful email about someone to your friends? Did you know this can be just as bad as starting it yourself? If you are watching bullying take place and you do not do anything to stop it, you are known as a bystander.

Bystanders are actually what the bullies want. They usually want people to witness the humiliation or embarrassment of the person who is being bullied. Without an audience bullies often don't see the point in continuing.

When it comes to cyber bullying, bystanders might forward messages, contribute to the discussions, or take part in an online poll. So even though they may not have started the bullying or think of themselves as bullying, they are active participants, making the situation worse and intensifying the distress for the person being bullied.

If you do nothing — the bullying will continue. If you step in you can help to limit or stop the bullying.

STEPPING IN MEANS:

- Recognising when someone is being bullied;
- Walking away — turning off your msn or getting offline so the bully doesn't have an immediate audience;
- Getting together with other bystanders to let the bully know that what they are doing is not acceptable;
- Keeping track or a record of the bullying so you can show a teacher, adult or someone you trust;
- Helping the person who has been bullied — how would you feel if it was you in that situation? What would help you feel supported if you were feeling bullied?

Cyber bullying can happen to anyone. It can be upsetting and stressful, impacting on different areas of your life, including; self-esteem, relationships, work or study. But there is help available. Talking to someone is a good starting point, particularly if you are feeling unsafe or frightened. See www.headspace.org.au to find help and support.

WHAT ELSE YOU CAN DO

- Encourage the person being bullied to report the cyber bullying to an adult and/or to the social networking site / provider;
- Encourage them to 'block' the person where possible (i.e. on facebook, msn etc.);
- Identify when and where the bullying is happening and see if you (or someone else) can be with them or online at these times;
- If you are online at the same time and see the cyber bullying, don't cyber bully or attack back — rather let your friend know you support them. Perhaps send them a note asking them what you can do to help;
- Dealing with bullies is one thing, dealing with emotions is another. Keep offering your support — if they are finding it hard to move forward encourage them to seek help and support from a professional (like a counsellor or someone at headspace) or for them to talk to someone at Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800).



Want to help others who are experiencing cyber bullying and don't know what to do? Send us your stories to encourage and provide hope to others who may be going through a similar situation by sharing what you did and how you sought help. Go to <http://www.headspace.org.au/home/my-headspace/your-stories/>

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